

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to have their stations air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. And to suggest that this is fair because they are offering Sen. Kerry time to comment after the showing is nonsense. A fair trade would be to show a similarly anti-Bush film and then invite the president to appear to comment. Or, simply air no such films from any side. There are already too many untruths, half-truths and lies circulating on television.

What Sinclair proposes to do poses a danger to the fair functioning of democracy, since it will present one side of an issue, a matter of opinion, as news on OUR airwaves. Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. I hope you weigh this case very carefully, because this kind of broadcasting--attack commentary masquerading as news--IS ROTTING OUR DEMOCRACY.

Besides, instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. For my money, the News Hour with Jim Lehrer is about the only daily news show worth watching, and that shouldn't be.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.

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